

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

**May 24, 2007  
1:30 p.m., MST**

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met in Room 1 of the Arizona Senate Building, 1700 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:38 p.m. MST.

## **1. Call to Order**

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman

Mr. Jim DiCello

Dr. Eugene Garcia

Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan

Ms. Johanna Haver

Ms. Eileen Klein

Ms. Karen Merritt

Absent:

Ms. Anna Rosas

Dr. John Baracy

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

## **2. Approval of March 29, 2007 minutes of Task Force meeting**

Mr. Alan Maguire asked if there were any edits or comments concerning the March 29, 2007 minutes. There were no comments or edits. Mr. Jim DiCello moved that the minutes be approved. Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan seconded. The March 29, 2007 minutes were approved unanimously.

Mr. Maguire made a call to the public at 1:38 p.m. in order that Superintendent of Public Instruction, Mr. Tom Horne, could address the Task Force. Mr. Horne, who had appointed three of the Task Force members, thanked the Task Force for its hard work. He mentioned a major federally funded research study examining time-on-task, which concluded that time-on-task has a positive effect on student learning. He acknowledged that sometimes studies must be conducted to reinforce what may already be known by common sense. He stated that it was his understanding that the Task Force is working on a model which includes four hours of English Language Development (ELD) instruction and that he is hopeful that once the models are implemented, the current, average 20% reclassification rate for English Language Learners (ELL) will be higher. Mr. Horne said that the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has

gained 20 additional employees who are responsible for providing technical assistance to the districts. Mr. Horne thanked each Task Force member for his and her contributions.

### **3. Presentation and Discussion of the Development of English Language Learner Models' Components**

Mr. Kevin Clark reviewed how staff will organize the topics and discussion of the Task Force meeting. He presented all the documents previously created and discussed the policy, principles, definitions, research, and structure of the ELL program models. The most recent handout (Attachment A) is a list of components, which are either required by statute or have been mentioned by Task Force members. He reminded Task Force members about research that has been conducted on the various components of the models, including time-on-task, and stated he would be asking members for any additional research review that should be conducted to support the other components of the models.

Mr. Clark reviewed the "Comparison of Current Practices and Draft Model Components" document, stating that the shaded rows were components of the models required by state statute and agreed upon by the Task Force. After reviewing items **a.** through **e.**, Mr. Clark asked for any comments. Dr. Eugene Garcia stated that while one may not necessarily agree with all the shaded components, they are nevertheless components dictated by Arizona statute.

Mr. Clark continued to item **f.** which states that English Language Development instruction will be driven by the ELL Proficiency Standards and the SEI Discrete Skills Inventory (DSI). Dr. Garcia stated that he doesn't want to limit time on any one skill or language component, but would prefer time allocations to act as guidance for a range of time or effort. Mr. Maguire stated that the time allocations are intended to help teachers move students along the proficiency standards' skill continuums. He commented that timeframes were correlated to the standards; for example, twenty-five percent of the time might be allocated to reading because reading proficiencies comprised of 25% of the standards. He also noted that these percentages would depend on grade and proficiency level.

Dr. Garcia said that he would prefer time allocations to be denoted as instructional effort rather than time blocks. He commented that there might be teachers who need minute by minute guidance. However, there are also teachers who can move beyond this framework and that they should not be constrained in their efforts. Mr. Maguire stated that in secondary schools, the time frame was derived from the hour block class schedule, and that each class would have a separate focus. By providing a firm structure this year, the Task Force can study the effects after implementation and modify the structure in future years.

Mr. Clark added that in testimony heard by the Task Force from schools last year, time allocations were widely dispersed. Also heard previously by the Task Force was a presentation on Reading First, which is a regimented language program with time allocations that has proved successful. Mr. Clark reminded the Task Force of the chart that correlated the coverage of each

subject in the ELL Proficiency Standards. He asked the Task Force how monitoring will be done if there are no guidelines on time allocations. Dr. Garcia asked if that was a concern, and if monitoring could be done by reviewing results. He asked what kinds of mechanisms there are in the model to ensure that students are moving forward, using formative assessments. Ms. Garcia Dugan stated that ADE provides monitoring services to review compliance. She stated that the current reclassification rate of 20% is not acceptable. Ms. Garcia Dugan said that she would prefer to be more restrictive this year with the possibility of easing up in subsequent years.

Ms. Eileen Klein asked Dr. Garcia for a definition of “effort” and how effort could be monitored and measured. Dr. Garcia stated that students come with different abilities and interests, and stated time alone may not move some students forward, so a teacher should have some leeway in focusing on various areas for different students. Mr. Maguire stated that the Task Force has the obligation to provide guidance on what comprises the four hours of ELD. He stated there has been wide flexibility in the field so far and this flexibility has not produced results. Therefore, the model should narrow the focus and become more restrictive in an effort to improve instruction and results. Dr. Garcia disagreed. Ms. Johanna Haver commented that sometimes the wide variance in ability in some students is a result of not having spent time on certain subject areas such as grammar. This has particularly been a problem with ELL students. She stated that one must be firm in requiring subjects to be covered, or they may not be taught. Dr. Garcia stated that with a reduced class size, a well-trained teacher, and the standards, the time will not prove as important. Ms. Garcia Dugan commented that 500 schools met only a 12% reclassification rate. There are many schools needing a focused model with clear guidelines to assist them. Schools have not been given a lot of guidance up to this point. Dr. Garcia stated that he wanted to be on record as not supporting time allocations. He asked that there be discussion about the other model components as well.

Ms. Klein asked for clarification on the Task Force’s process. Mr. Maguire stated that they would go point by point through the components and discuss them, hopefully to find a consensus or at least a majority on each component and whether each component would be included in the draft model.

Mr. Jim DiCello referred to the May 3<sup>rd</sup> document that gave ranges of time for each of the four identified English language skills as well as the percentage of coverage for each in the ELL Proficiency Standards. Mr. DiCello moved that, with regard to the draft model, the Task Force shall take into consideration the recommended time spans as given in the exhibit Program Model Rationale from the April 26, 2007 document. Ms. Garcia Dugan seconded the motion. Dr. Garcia asked for clarification of the wording of the motion. Mr. Maguire stated that the recommended time allocations would be included in the draft models to be presented to the Task Force on June 14, 2007. Mr. DiCello said he meant that the chairman shall use the recommended time spans in his consideration of the draft. There were six votes in favor, one vote against, and two members absent. The motion passed with a majority vote, and was approved by the Task Force.

Next Mr. Clark addressed item **g.** on teacher qualifications. Dr. Garcia stated that the models would need highly trained teachers who would need extensive professional development. In addition, these highly trained teachers possibly would need to be reading specialists or have background in English language arts. He stated that the time allocations would not help if the level of instruction isn't there. Mr. DiCello stated that if the models require English as a Second Language (ESL), full Structured English Immersion (SEI), or Bilingual endorsements, these requirements may pose a hardship for some districts to find qualified teachers. Ms. Garcia Dugan said that the state is already moving toward meeting the state requirement that all certified staff must have the full SEI endorsement by first requiring staff to attain the provisional SEI endorsement through 15 hours of SEI instruction. Now teachers and administrators are required to attain an additional 45 hours of SEI instruction in order to fulfill the 60 hour requirement for the full SEI endorsement. This applies to educators holding a valid teaching certificate on or before August 31, 2006. Those attaining a teaching certificate after August 31, 2006, are required to complete 90 hours for the full SEI endorsement. She said that by 2009 all provisionally endorsed teachers must have a full SEI endorsement.

Ms. Klein raised the point that in the schools surveyed, success didn't seem related to the (SEI) endorsement, but rather to systematic training and reviews. She was not prepared to say that any of the endorsements prepare teachers for what the Task Force is proposing in the models. Mr. Maguire noted that there was a difference between the endorsement and the training that will be required for teachers to teach the discrete language skills as proposed in the models. Teachers who had been grandfathered in would be given additional support. Ms. Klein stated that if teachers already have the training inherent in their degree and the endorsements, then the models should not require above and beyond this level of training. Dr. Garcia asked what kinds of degrees teachers have. Ms. Garcia Dugan stated that most elementary grade teachers have a bachelor in elementary education. She said that many teachers could teach an effective ELL class with the 15 hour provisional SEI endorsement. She said that the choice of training preparation for ELL teachers should be left to site principals who know their teachers. Ms. Merritt stated that in secondary schools, English teachers must have a degree in Language Arts and should be well prepared.

Dr. Garcia asked for some literature research on teacher credentials. Mr. Clark had conducted some research on the training involved in the SEI endorsement and stated that what the model was requiring had more of a linguistic element than was covered in the SEI endorsement training. He offered to create a chart showing content areas covered by the endorsement. Dr. Garcia stated that he wants the models to dictate a full SEI endorsement. Ms. Garcia Dugan asked if the Task Force would need to allow time for training and whether ADE needs to provide the training necessary. Ms. Merritt asked if requiring a full SEI endorsement would be a burden or not. She said that it might be desirable, but not feasible. Ms. Garcia Dugan thought a full SEI endorsement requirement would be feasible if there was an understanding that teachers in the process of obtaining the endorsement would be allowed to teach ELD.

Mr. Maguire stated that the draft model would include a recommendation of a full SEI, ESL, Bilingual, or provisional SEI moving toward full SEI endorsement. There was consensus for this recommendation among the Task Force members.

Mr. Clark moved to item **i.** which addresses class size. Mr. Maguire stated that teaching narrower bands of language proficiency could allow for larger class sizes. Mr. Clark offered to review student grouping strategies that would determine class sizes. From the handout, "SEI Program Models," he presented Model A in a high incidence school, referring back to the statements of principles document and verbiage in the revised statute, that students should be grouped according to proficiency. Ms. Merritt asked what constitutes a high incidence school. Mr. Clark stated that the model is by grade, and that if there are sufficient numbers to create multiple classrooms of ELD, Model A should be employed. Ms. Merritt discussed collapsing the basic and intermediate into a single classroom. Mr. Clark stated that this would violate the principles, and that there is a significant difference in language proficiency between basic and intermediate level ELL students. Ms. Merritt stated that pre-emergent and emergent often move very quickly through basic, and then stay at intermediate.

Dr. Garcia stated that the model should clearly denote that the grouping is done at the beginning of the school year, and that the classroom stays the same with the same teacher as the students move through the various proficiency levels through the year. The students do not change teachers unless they test proficient on Arizona's English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) and move into mainstream classrooms. Dr. Garcia said that, in his opinion, is problematic in that students will move at individual paces. Mr. Clark stated that the strategy was to homogenize the grouping at the beginning of the year, with the understanding that after this point, progress will vary. Ms. Garcia Dugan suggested the possibility of co-teaching teams. Dr. Garcia agreed with this strategy, stating that what is needed is an instructional system that takes into account the need to reduce variance but also takes into account the nature of language where there can be wide variance. Ms. Merritt suggested placing Basic level students in both a pre-emergent/emergent classroom or the basic/intermediate class based on their areas of AZELLA proficiency. Dr. Garcia agreed, stating this could be represented by having the circles overlap. Mr. Clark stated that if teachers are teaching the discrete skills set starting at the pre-emergent level of conjugating simple present tense verbs, this level of instruction might be necessary for a pre-emergent but already known by the basic or intermediate ELL students. Therefore, the more the groupings are homogenized by language proficiency, the better.

Mr. Clark proceeded to Model B which combines basic proficiency with intermediate proficiency. In Model C, all proficiency levels are grouped together into a single grade span. In Model D, all proficiency levels are grouped together into grade clusters. Model D addresses schools with extremely low numbers of ELLs by allowing a district supplied teacher to teach 2 classes at two different schools for three hours each, with the fourth hour consisting of a reading class. For the remainder of the day, ELL students would be grouped in a mainstream classroom.

Dr. Garcia asked if real numbers from schools could be provided to show actual groupings. Mr. Clark stated that this information could be provided to the Task Force. Dr. Garcia asked if a high

incidence school can choose to use Model D rather than Model A, if Model D is still in compliance with the law. Mr. Maguire replied that no, this is a methodology, not a list of choices, and that the grouping must be first by proficiency and then by grade; the last model is used only if there are not enough ELLs to make a classroom. Ms. Haver agreed that choosing models that do not fit the incidence level of the school should be discouraged. Ms. Klein raised the point that since the groupings are by grade level, it is conceivable that all four models could exist at the same school. Mr. DiCello stressed the need to have a class size range to provide guidance. Ms. Merritt proposed a Model D version for charter schools. Mr. Maguire stressed that the methodology is not a choice and must be followed, and the groupings that occur simply depend on the numbers of students at each level. Models A-D are not choices. Model determination is the outcome of the SEI models' student grouping methodology. This methodology remains consistent.

Dr. Garcia suggested putting ranges on the document to show recommended class sizes. He suggested a class size near 18, since research studies show optimal learning at this size. Ms. Klein asked if that research was ELL specific. Dr. Garcia replied that it is not. Mr. Maguire stated that the narrower the proficiency band, the larger the class size can probably be since all students will be at a similar level. Dr. Garcia noted that Chino Valley in California had a class size of 20. Mr. DiCello reminded him that California has a state funded program to reduce class size, and that such a class size may not be feasible in Arizona without voter-approved funding. Ms. Garcia Dugan proposed that if the groupings were homogenous, a normal class size of 25 should work. Ms. Merritt said she would prefer to see a maximum of 20 unless there is a teacher's aide. Ms. Haver stated that more energy is required for pre-emergent and emergent and less at intermediate so intermediate could be a little larger. Dr. Garcia suggested that an ideal size for pre-emergent/emergent would be 20, and 20-25 for basic and intermediate. Mr. Maguire said they could start with this. Mr. DiCello asked if the number was an average or a maximum. Ms. Klein asked how this compared to non-ELL classrooms. Classrooms could be capped at 25 in kindergarten but could be as high as 32 in secondary schools. Ms. Klein stated that class size was not as high a priority as other model components. Mr. Maguire suggested a range of 20-22 students for pre-emergent/emergent classrooms and 22-27 for basic and intermediate level ELD classrooms. There was general consensus.

Next, Mr. Clark presented for discussion items **j.**, **k.**, and **l.**, which focus on SEI models' implementation components. Mr. DiCello asked what kind of staff ADE has devoted to implementation. Mr. Cooper from ADE told the Task Force that he is in charge of the implementation plan and that ADE has been brainstorming ideas on implementation. He also said that ADE has been in consultation with the county superintendents and will be meeting with their chairperson. In addition, ADE has discussed various delivery methodologies where teachers can view recordings of model instruction; attain online manuals; and watch films of California teachers demonstrating the use of discrete skills inventories in daily classroom instruction, if these films align with Arizona's discrete skills set. Mr. Cooper said that it will be an ongoing area of development. ADE may look at attaining additional personnel, consisting of retired teachers or others with experience in this field, to act as field agents.

Mr. Maguire stated that he wanted the Task Force to consider implementation as well, since the second best plan well implemented can do much better than the best plan poorly implemented. There was a consensus that implementation is important and that the Task Force should prescribe some implementation practices. Ms. Merritt stated that there needs to be a distinction between the strategy and the content. The discrete skills index is the content, and things like SIOP are strategies, not content. Mr. Maguire agreed, adding that special strategies may be required for DSI. Ms. Merritt asked who is responsible for DSI content training and DSI related materials. Mr. DiCello stated that if the Task Force says it is part of the model, it becomes part of implementation. Ms. Merritt asked if the Task Force will require a set number of hours to teach ELD. Mr. Maguire and Ms. Garcia Dugan said that ELD training would not be another endorsement, but simply the continuing professional development of teachers.

The Task Force next discussed item **n**, which relates to on-going in-class proficiency assessments. Mr. Clark mentioned a previous Task Force discussion about administering a mid-year AZELLA so that ELLs could be reclassified mid-year. Dr. Garcia proposed formative assessments correlated to AZELLA. Teachers and students could use this in addition to AZELLA to monitor ongoing progress. Ms. Garcia Dugan added that the tests could be validated and provided online for schools to use. Ms. Merritt asked if this would be a requirement. Ms. Garcia Dugan stated that it would not be required, but simply provided as a tool, and then the results could be studied. Ms. Merritt mentioned software sometimes used as part of an ELD program and whether this could be recommended as well. Mr. DiCello said the Task Force cannot really recommend vendors but could recommend software in general as a tool. Ms. Merritt mentioned that the software often has formative assessments.

Mr. Clark asked what further items need to be researched. Mr. Maguire stated that items **j**, through **l**, were effectively researched through Chino Valley's presentation. He also stated that the bottom half of the components list essentially was derived from the top half. Ms. Klein said that where there is academic research on items she would like to see it listed, and if there is no academic research, she would like that noted also. She wanted research only directly related to ELLs. Mr. Maguire stated that there would be further discussion on monitoring and a timeline for implementation.

Mr. Maguire stated that he would try to get a draft model out to Task Force members by June 7 for their review, and comments should be directed to Marlene at ADE, who will then distribute comments and proposed changes before the June 14 Task Force meeting. Dr. Garcia questioned the possibility of having this all done in time for the June 14 meeting, for which he will not be present. Ms. Merritt asked when the cost analysis and funding would be discussed. Mr. Maguire stated that once the Task Force tentatively adopts a draft model(s), the model(s) will be submitted for a 30 day review and then implemented by districts, which will be able to calculate net incremental cost and submit a funding request based on that funding. Mr. DiCello stated that during the 30 day review the Task Force could focus on implementation, including application forms for funding.

#### **4. Discussion and Possible Action on Adoption of one or more Components of English Language Learner Models to be incorporated into Draft Models**

Mr. Alan Maguire explained the process the Task Force may use to complete the tasks assigned. Mr. Kevin Clark will walk the Task Force members through the components of a possible model(s) which contains several items that the Task Force might want to adopt. To date, there has been only discussion of these various components. Mr. Maguire stated that he would like to adopt some firm components and write a first draft of the model(s) that he would submit to Task Force members for feedback. Task Force members would provide comments and proposed changes. Then the draft, along with all of the comments and proposed changes, could be presented to the Task Force at the next meeting. There are two dates in June where most of the Task Force members are available: June 14 and June 27.

Mr. Jim DiCello referred to the May 3<sup>rd</sup> document, which gave ranges of time on each subject as well as the percentage of coverage in the ELL Proficiency Standards. Mr. DiCello moved that with regard to the draft model the Task Force shall take into consideration the recommended time allocations as given in the exhibit Program Model Rationale from the May 3, 2007 document. Ms. Garcia Dugan seconded the motion. Dr. Garcia asked for clarification of the wording of the motion; Mr. Maguire stated that the recommended time allocations would be included in the draft model(s) to be presented to the Task Force on June 14, 2007. Mr. DiCello said he meant that the chairman shall use the recommended time allocations in his consideration of the draft. There were six votes in favor, one vote against, and two members absent. The motion passed with a majority vote, and was approved by the Task Force.

Mr. DiCello moved that the Task Force direct the chairman to prepare a written draft of the SEI ELL model that will include items **a.** through **n.** on the handout, "Comparison of Current Practices and Draft Models Components," dated May 24, 2007 and on the whiteboard from the same date. Ms. Garcia Dugan seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

#### **5. Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Activities**

Mr. Alan Maguire proposed that with the components adopted today by the Task Force, a first draft of the models will be written and distributed to the Task Force by June 7, allowing Task Force members a week to submit comments and proposed changes. The draft model and all comments and proposed changes will be presented to the Task Force during the June 14 Task Force meeting.

#### **6. Call to the Public**

Mr. Maguire made a second call to the public at 4:33 p.m. Mr. Burke from Yuma Elementary School District addressed the Task Force and asked about the ELL program for kindergarten



students. He asked if ELLs in kindergarten would be required to have four hours of ELD, since full day kindergarten is by parent request only. He said that parents can also request half day kindergarten. Mr. Burke asked if the four hours of ELD needed to be continuous in a middle school ELL program, or if the four hours could be divided up during the day and assigned to different teachers. He then asked if schools will be providing four hours of ELD for second year ELLs and if the four hours of instruction will be funded for second year ELLs.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Alan Maguire, Chairman

August 15, 2007